

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2011



On May 2, 2011, to celebrate Law Day, the Public Outreach Committee of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut will be hosting programs for local students at the Courthouses in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Law Day is a national day of celebration officially designated by a joint resolution of Congress in 1961 that focuses on our heritage of liberty under the law. This year's Law Day theme is "Living in the Land of the Free: Freedom and Responsibility." Tenth graders from Central High School in Bridgeport (Anne Engelson, Principal), Hill Regional Career Magnet High School in New Haven (Michael Ceraso, Principal), and Law & Government Academy in Hartford (Adam Johnson, Principal) will come to the federal courthouse in their city to participate in a true-to-life trial simulation to foster their understanding of the trial process and the role of our federal courts in resolving disputes. Grade school students will also create original works of art to be displayed in the courthouses expressing what it means to them to be living in the land of the free. The schools participating are Thomas Hooker School in Bridgeport (Lourdes Delgado, Principal), Davis Street Arts and Academics School in New Haven (Lola Nathan, Principal), and John C. Clark School in Hartford (William Chambers, Principal).

This year's Law Day activities are part of a larger effort by the Public Outreach Committee to educate young people and the public to the important role that the Federal Courts, our Judges and lawyers play in preserving the rule of law and promoting the freedoms we have often come to take for granted. Said Chief Judge Alvin W. Thompson of the Public Outreach Committee, "Our goal is to help students and other members of the public develop a better understanding of the importance of the rule of law in a country that was founded based on the ideals of justice and liberty for all. We also wish to promote a better understanding of the civil and criminal justice systems. We hope our theme for Law Day will prompt students to think about the important relationship between the freedoms they enjoy as the result of growing up in this country and the responsibilities of citizenship."

The trial simulation being used this year involves an issue familiar to high school students – texting while driving. It is based on a real civil case that was decided by the United States Supreme Court, involving a car crash that may have been caused by driving while texting. The trial simulation is scripted, and the students will be afforded the opportunity to play meaningful parts, as counsel, witnesses and jurors. Local attorneys and court personnel have volunteered to visit the students at their schools to prepare them for the trial simulation.

The trial simulation programs will be held on May 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Brien McMahon Federal Building in Bridgeport, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Richard C. Lee Courthouse in New Haven, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building in Hartford. The original works of art will be on display in these courthouses from April 27 through May 13, 2011.

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